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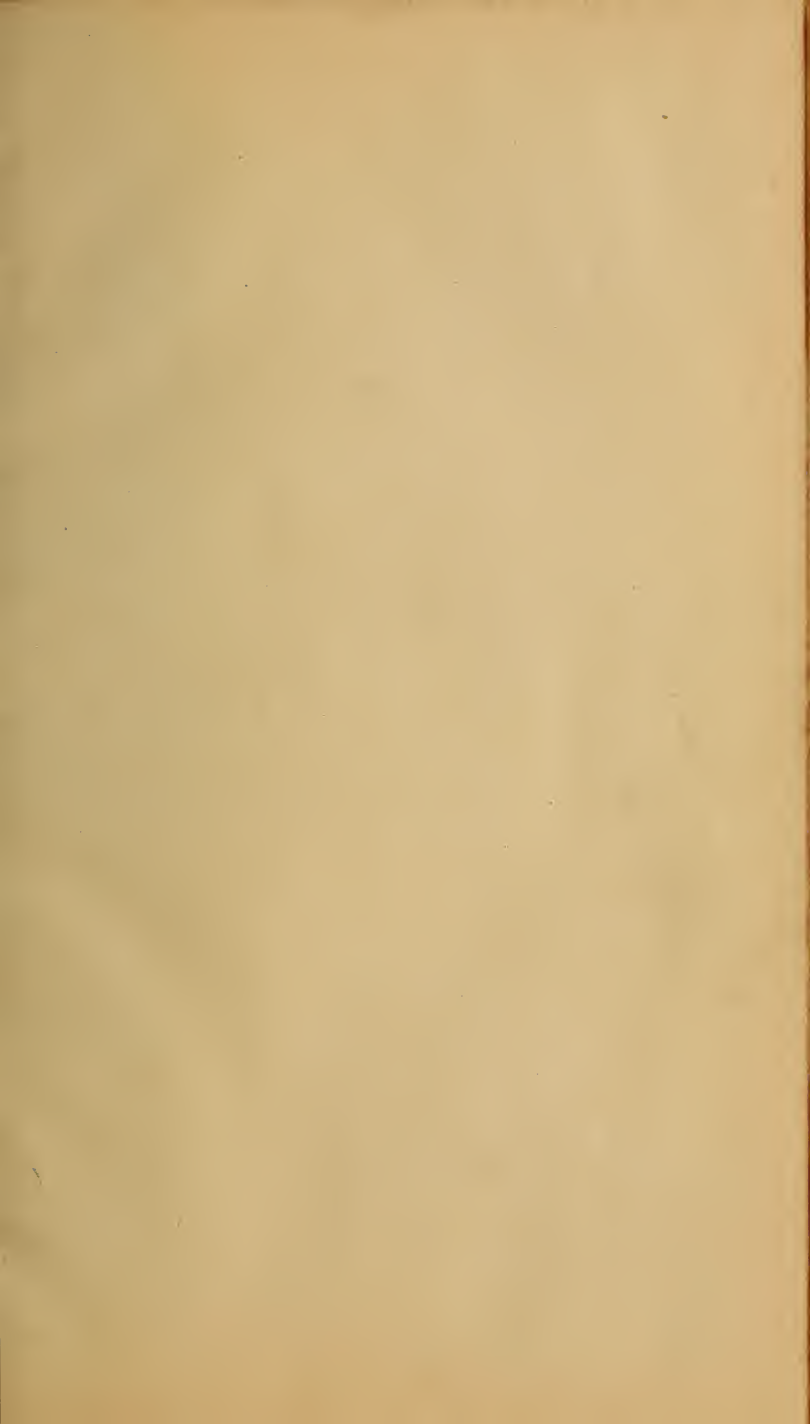
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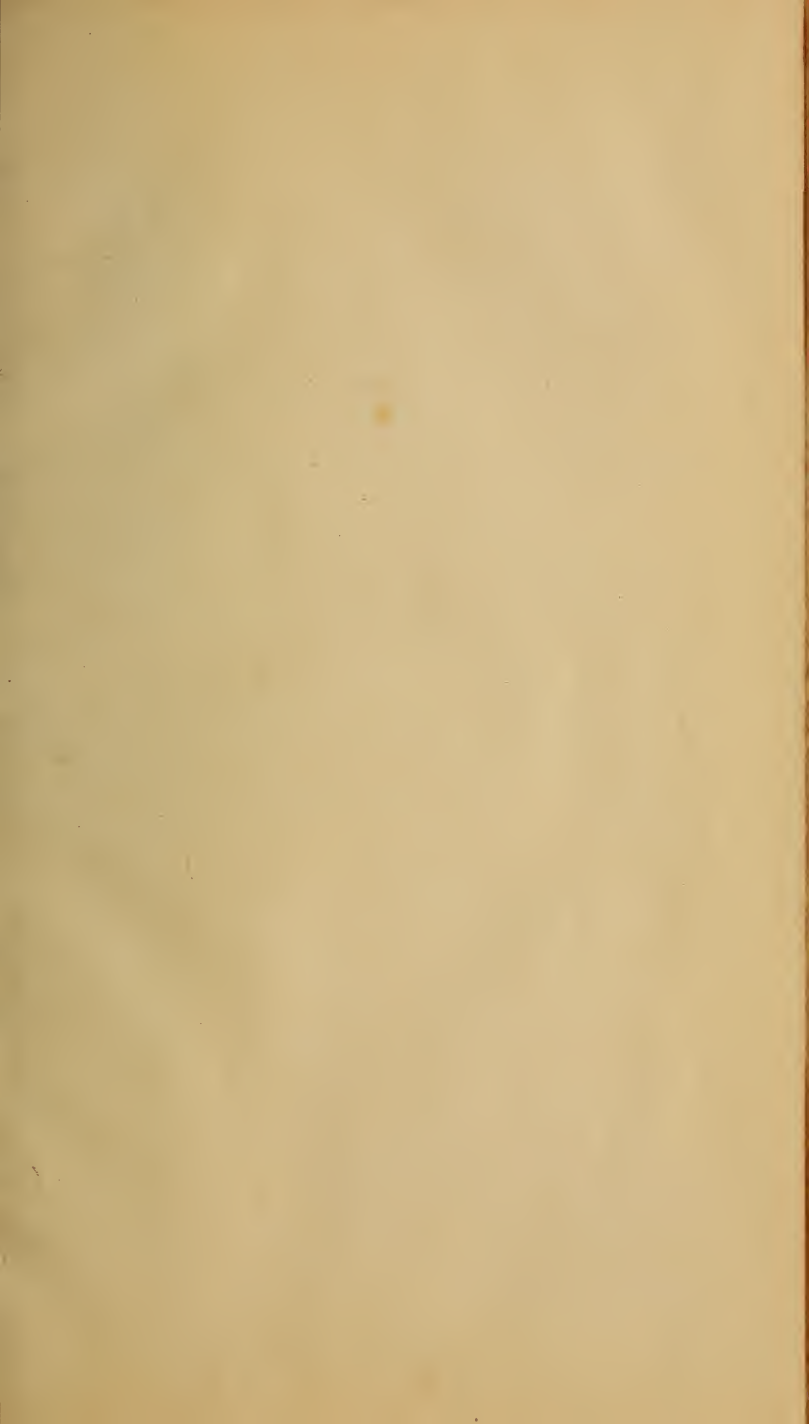


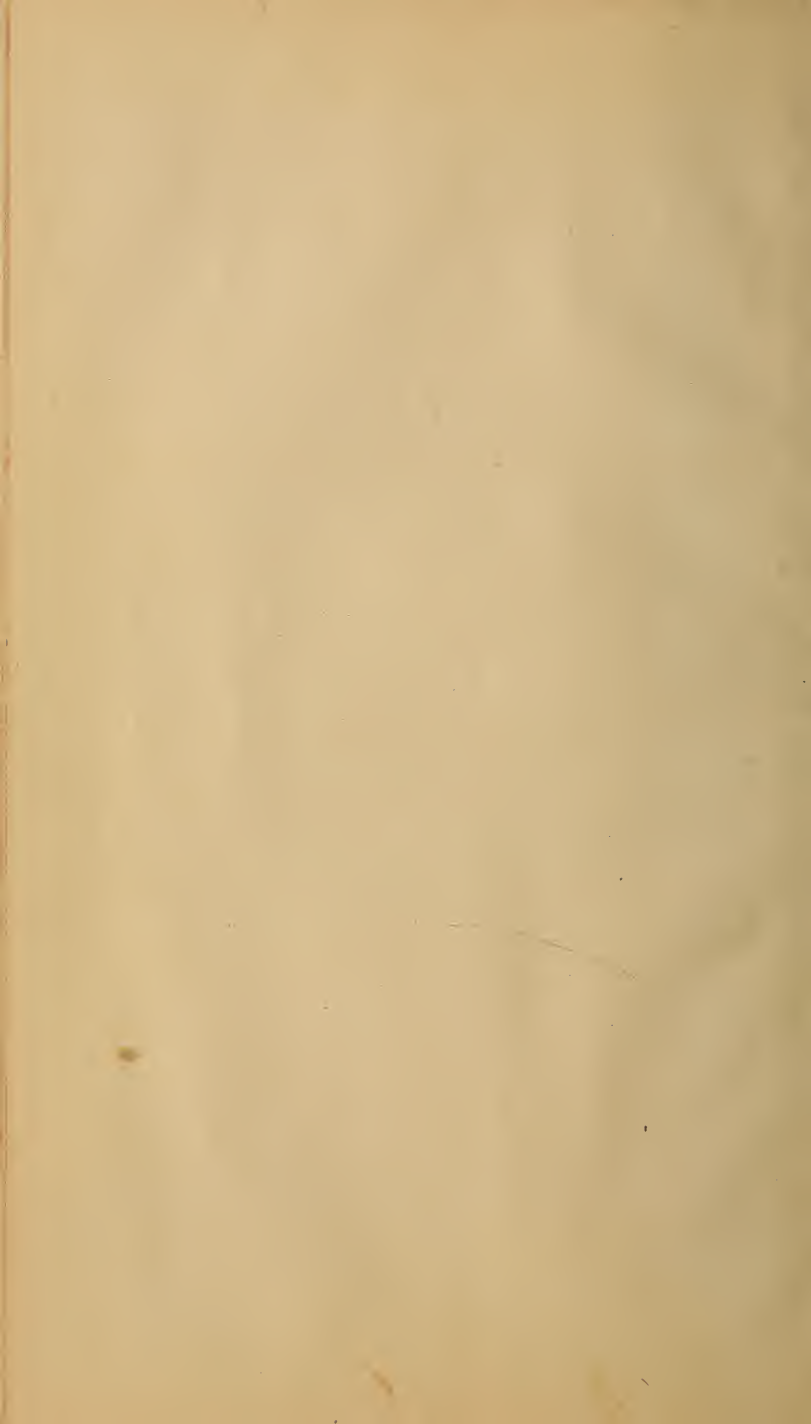














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NESCIENCE VERSUS PRESCIENCE:

A POETICAL REVIEW

OF

"AN INQUIRY INTO THE POPULAR NOTION

OF AN

UNORIGINATED, INFINITE, AND ETERNAL PRESCIENCE."

WITH ILLUSTRATIVE NOTES, AND AN APPENDIX.

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BY ANTI-EMPIRICUS.

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"Vain Wisdom all, and false Philosophy!"—MILTON, *Par. Lost*, B. ii, l. 565.

"Having become dead in law, it devolves on THE POET, as his property, who may take him and deal with him as with some old Egyptian hero; that is to say, embowel and embalm him for posterity."—POPE, *Preface to Dunciad*.

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The following Poem was written several years since, and has been handed about in M.S. among the author's acquaintance. It is now printed, for the purpose of meeting the wishes of those who have solicited copies; and to avoid the labour of transcription, which divers promises would otherwise have imposed. He regards the book reviewed, as the most amusing specimen of Philosophical Empiricism with which he is acquainted. He has endeavoured, with the assistance of Rhyme, to set its absurdities in a striking and instructive light, and so to render it useful, as an example of the eccentricities of human opinion, and as a warning against the abuse of Reason, and the affectation of Philosophy. Thus have we seen an insect, worthless when living, become an object interesting for its beauty and rarity when dead, by being enclosed, and as it were enshrined, in transparent amber.

## nescience *versus* prescience :

&c.

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Agnostos wrote a curious book on "Prescience,"  
Wishing to fix some limits to Omniscience<sup>1</sup>;  
That Infinite our faith no more might stumble,  
Nor Mystery our pride of reason humble;  
That speculative souls no more might sigh,  
"Such knowledge is too wonderful and high:"  
All that's the most Divine, 'twas his intention,  
To lower down to human comprehension.

The plan was specious, if not wholly new;  
And mighty benefits must needs accrue.  
What prospects open to ingenuous youth;  
A royal road to universal truth!  
The *ne plus ultra* is attained at once,  
And all made easy to the greatest dunce.  
The tree of knowledge has Agnostos search'd,  
And sees himself upon its summit perch'd;  
While to the blundering crowds below he cries,  
"Peruse my book, and 'twill uncloze your eyes :  
Come follow me, and climb the blest abodes ;  
By my assistance ye shall all be gods."

Thus, like some Doctor on a public stage,  
With worst diseases offering to engage ;  
To whose famed nostrum Death himself must yield,  
Give back the prey, and quit at once the field ;  
Some self-praised stranger, sent to bless mankind,  
To cure the sick and to restore the blind ;  
For his own talents does this author vouch,  
And waits our intellectual sight to couch.  
Error in every form, from every place,  
World without end, shall his performance chase ;  
All ignorance before him shall retire,  
And nothing more be left us to enquire<sup>2</sup>.



This maxim first, his system brings to view ;  
 "What is mysterious never can be true."  
 From whence this rule proceeds—let all attend—  
 "Reject whatever you don't comprehend<sup>3</sup>;  
 To your own understandings always trust<sup>4</sup>;  
 And if they clash with Scripture, why—they must ;  
 'Tis very well when Holy writ agrees  
 With what the mind intuitively sees ;  
 Or when it will admit of a construction  
 Consistent with each rational deduction<sup>5</sup> :  
 But if I am to yield implicit faith<sup>6</sup>,—  
 If I must credit all the Bible saith,  
 And bow to its authority alone,  
 My reason then no longer is my own.  
 'Tis godlike Reason's office, as chief guide,  
 Upon our creed and practice to decide :  
 Even Revelation, as I've clearly shewn<sup>7</sup>,  
 From Reason her authority has drawn :  
 Till Reason's *imprimatur* has been given,  
 Weak and invalid are the words of Heaven.  
 And shall we, while our Reason's sun shines bright,  
 Prefer a borrowed and imperfect light ?  
 For your own faculties have more respect,  
 Nor basely prostrate thus your intellect<sup>8</sup>."  
 Such was the system which Agnostos taught ;  
 And this he took for "liberty of thought"<sup>9</sup>!  
 Thus bold Socinus, in a former age<sup>9</sup>,  
 Renounced the mysteries of the Sacred page ;  
 From Inspiration's teaching turned aside,  
 And set up Reason as a surer guide ;  
 Explaining even the Creator's glories,  
 By Aristotle and the Categories.

Such speculations, I beg leave to say,  
 Hardly become a creature formed of clay ;  
 Though intellectual, fallen ;—and if you will,  
 Of high account ;—but there be higher still.  
 O, how shall I the mighty contrast draw,  
 'Twixt our presumption, and their sacred awe ?  
 While those bright hosts who skirt the Almighty's throne,  
 Dazzled with lustre brighter than their own,  
 Bow down in worship, trembling as they gaze,  
 Veiling their eyes in that o'erwhelming blaze ;—  
 While at God's presence even demons cower,  
 Knowing full well the thunder of his power<sup>10</sup> ;—  
 Vain men who would be wise pretend to see,  
 Quite clearly, what he *must* or *must not* be ;

Maim his perfections, contradict his word,  
 Nor tremble at "the terror of the Lord!"  
 Religion! Source of light! by thee are given  
 Those thoughts and hopes that lift the soul to heaven;  
 And we that sight shall through thy guidance prove,  
 Which wraps in ecstasy the blest above.  
 But our Philosophers thy help decry;  
 And, scorning thee, their own inventions try:  
 And since to earth they are resolved to keep,  
 Their proper motion being, like snails, to creep<sup>11</sup>,  
 All heavenward aspiration they condemn,  
 And strive to bring the Almighty down to them;  
 To place him on more equal terms with man:—  
 Such was our Author's philosophic plan.

According to this Sage's theory,  
 Not God himself the future can foresee:  
 His wisdom's not so great but that it may,  
 And does increase, and that too every day<sup>12</sup>.  
 The prophecies, though penned so long before  
 The event, are shrewd conjectures; nothing more;  
 Save in those cases where what is to be  
 Has been before hand fixed infallibly<sup>13</sup>.  
 The most direct responses, we are told,  
 Accorded to the favoured saints of old,  
 Were only "God's *opinion* on the case,"  
 Importing what might probably take place:  
 Displaying, without doubt, great penetration;  
 But not conveying certain information<sup>14</sup>.  
 The world will one day end, the Bible shows;  
 But *when* 'twill be, not even its Maker knows<sup>15</sup>:  
 And some events through length of time, perchance,  
 May have escaped his boundless cognizance<sup>16</sup>!  
 In short, on these and other subjects, God  
 His whole amount of knowledge has bestowed;  
 Of his own purposes the total sum,  
 All that is past, and all that is to come<sup>17</sup>.

Upon these doctrines, rest our Author's claim  
 To notice, and his hope of future fame.  
 The happiness he seems the most to prize,  
 Is that of being deemed both bold and wise.  
 Wiser than Saints and Prophets must he be  
 Who could establish this discovery;  
 Bold all must own him who his book have read,  
 "For fools rush in where angels fear to tread<sup>18</sup>."  
 O wondrous creature! vastly clever man!  
 Who thus presum'st thy Maker's mind to scan,

And would'st persuade us that, beyond all doubt,  
 God by thy searching is at length found out.  
 Thou would'st have liked, it seems, to take thy fill  
 Of speculation on the infernal hill,  
 With Milton's devils, when they did dispute  
 On "fate, free-will, foreknowledge absolute"<sup>19</sup>.  
 Hadst thou been present, such a flood of light  
 Thou would'st have shed as must have set them right;  
 But as they could not that advantage boast,  
 They "found no end, in wandering mazes lost!"  
 Ah! hadst thou blazed amidst the infernal walls,  
 Or ruled the roast in Pandemonium's halls  
 Ah! hadst thou but held forth in that divan,  
 Would they have ended but where they began?  
 But though thou may'st be for that college fit,  
 Even as Professor in its chair to sit,  
 As far as high aspiring thoughts can make thee<sup>20</sup>,  
 Yet for a fallen angel none will take thee.  
 Rather I view thee as some reasoning mole,  
 Pondering within its philosophic soul,  
 All natures and the properties of each;  
 Guessing how far an "angel's ken" might reach:  
 While to his fellow moles he clearly shews,  
 That men can't see an inch beyond their nose;  
 And that their strange pretences to descry  
 Objects afar, and suns and stars on high,  
 Are nothing better than a bare-faced fiction,  
 That carries with it its own contradiction:  
 Concluding that his own imperfect glimmer,  
 Than which, 'tis said, no twilight can be dimmer,  
 Is perfect day—complete illumination—  
 Surpassed by nothing in the whole creation!  
 So purblind are thy notions, O Agnostos!  
 And then, how *modestly* dost thou accost us!  
 Of thy disciples the important squad  
 Is styled "the army of the living God,"  
 And all besides "uncircumcised Philistines,"  
 Not worthy to be looked upon as Christians<sup>21</sup>;—  
 Mere hypocrites, pretending to receive  
 A doctrine which, in fact, they don't believe<sup>22</sup>.  
 No doubt ye are the people:—Wisdom's morn  
 Ne'er dawned upon mankind till you were born,  
 And even the Church, ere rose our Author's light,  
 Lay wrapped in darkness and Egyptian night!  
 Though Heaven's prerogative thou would'st dispute,  
 The Testaments, both Old and New, confute,

Oppose the creed of martyrs and of sages,  
 And contradict the wisdom of all ages;  
 Thy towering mind in its presumption strong,  
 Suspected not that though couldst e'er be wrong.  
 No lurking diffidence hast thou betrayed;  
 No deference to old opinions paid;  
 But *ex-cathedra* thou pronouncest still,  
 The Pope himself not more infallible.  
 Around, thy fulminations thickly fly;  
 And on thy page stand "names of blasphemy:"  
 With pride inflated, frog-like dost thou swell,  
 And set thee up for the world's oracle.

When philosophic Ignorance we see  
 In marriage joined to fulsome Vanity,  
 (Such union is indeed a thing of course,  
 Nor will the parties ever seek divorce:)  
 The offspring is some daring speculation,  
 Or metaphysical hallucination;  
 Some pigmy paradox, much given to lying,  
 Or Atheist creed, all heaven and earth defying;  
 Whose parents view with fondness and with pride,  
 The form that shocks and sickens all beside.

Hail, true Philosophy! the Muse would not  
 Of thee indulge one disrespectful thought:  
 Thy aid she seeks, her flight 'tis thine to guide;  
 From thy rich stores her wants are still supplied:  
 By thee forsaken she would droop her wing,  
 Or wander a forlorn and useless thing.  
 At insults offered thee her anger glows,  
 And her keen shafts are pointed at thy foes;  
 While of those foes she deems the worst to be  
 Those who their own inventions charge on thee;—  
 Pseudo-philosophers, impostors sage:—  
 With them the Muse unceasing war would wage.  
 Their scientific prate and pedant air  
 Disgust the wise and make the vulgar stare:  
 Yet though they have thee "on their lips, 'tis plain,  
 These dunces do but "take thy name in vain."

Agnostos, influenced by the inspiring hope  
 That his rare talents might have freer scope,  
 Determined that he would no longer plod  
 In Orthodoxy's dull and beaten road;  
 In which of green there does not grow one splinter;  
 'Tis like a polar and perpetual winter:  
 'Tis barren all; no harvest will it yield  
 Of wit and humour; it presents no field



For sportive fancy's free luxuriation,  
 Or metaphysical investigation ;  
 No room for calculations arithmetic,  
 For process analytic or synthetic :  
 No data, for computing chance, appear ;  
 No soundings of profundities are here :  
 No art or science will it ever better,  
 Nor add to literature a single letter ;  
 In short one's mental appetite it mocks :—  
 Thus he describes the doctrine orthodox <sup>23</sup>.  
 Within such limits could his genius stay ?  
 No ; he preferred a very different way.  
 How, like an eagle, he the clouds explores !  
 How, like his own "Contingency," he soars !  
 How bold and brilliant was the track he chose !  
 What flowers of rhetoric round his path he strows ;  
 What stores of learning to his task he brings,  
 While talking of "the hypostasis of things <sup>24</sup> ;"  
 Of "Prescience that extends to all the past <sup>25</sup>,  
 And of a "Now that cannot always last <sup>26</sup> !"  
 He tells us that "a fixed anticipation  
 Supposes an infallible causation <sup>27</sup> ;"  
 And that it is not possible to fly  
 Beyond the bounds of possibility <sup>28</sup>.  
 Vast armies of "contingencies" he sees,  
 That buzz and swarm like locusts, or like bees ;  
 Darkening the world with their portentous flight <sup>29</sup>;  
 But, till arrived, invisible to sight,  
 Because they are "Contingencies *in re* <sup>30</sup> ;"  
 Subjects of "Abstract Possibility <sup>31</sup> ;"—  
 A queen who rules with arbitrary sway  
 The flitting myriads who her laws obey.  
 But her dominion's short : Time lifts the curtain,  
 And then these vagrant natures grow more certain :  
 They spring to light and take a fixed abode,  
 Leaving their comrades jostling on the road ;  
 Who in their turn their sovereign's power defy,  
 These sturdy rebels are so bold and sly <sup>32</sup>.  
 At length (the usual fate of kings and queens,  
 When they to strong rebellion yield the reins)  
 Her sceptre broken and her sway made void,  
 Poor Possibility is quite destroyed <sup>33</sup>.  
 'Tis true, I grant, that she revives again,  
 And then enjoys an everlasting reign <sup>34</sup>.  
 Such wonders, so Agnostos says, are done ;  
 To shew there's *something* new beneath the sun.



Yet e'en himself our author has surpassed  
 In the next instance, which I mention last :  
 Resolved at once all meaning to " outstep,"  
 And Contradiction's barriers to o'erleap,  
 Assisted by his favorite theory,  
 He even annihilates nonentity<sup>35</sup> !

Thy book as much, Agnostos, gives offence  
 To sober thought, good taste, and common sense,  
 As it oppugns the Scriptures and the faith  
 Which thou art bound to hold and teach till death.  
 If thou hadst studied in sound Reason's college,  
 Thou wouldst not make Omniscience grow in knowledge ;  
 Nor fancy Wisdom Infinite enriched  
 With new perceptions, from its creatures fetched<sup>36</sup>.  
 Of " God's acquirements" thou, forsooth, hast spoken<sup>37</sup>,  
 And of his promises revoked or broken<sup>38</sup>;  
 Of Heaven's resolve, once fixed, at length that falters ;  
 And of Immutability that alters<sup>39</sup> !  
 Can Bedlam match absurdities like these,  
 Or make the Almighty " cast nativities"<sup>40</sup> ?  
 Such are the dogmas of our learned clerk ;  
 Sworn foe to mystery, yet sublimely dark ;  
 Who from all check of rule or reason freed,  
 Breaks Pegasus's neck and Priscian's head ;  
 And floundering onward comes at length to be  
 Engulfed in oceans of absurdity.

There's one excuse, Agnostos, which thy case  
 Admits of, and it here shall find a place :  
 Thy head is weak, thy heart, I trust, not bad ;  
 Much something, if not learning, makes thee mad.  
 Thou never couldst have writ in such a strain,  
 If Metaphysics had not turned thy brain.  
 The fountain of thy thoughts hath boiled and bubbled,  
 Like that famed pool at certain seasons troubled ;  
 Save that no healing influence attends,  
 No angel to produce the effect descends.  
 Some " hideous goblin" still attends on thee,  
 Which no ones eye besides thine own can see<sup>41</sup>;  
 Some " damned sprite" is to thy fancy shewn,  
 Harrowing thy feelings up and thine alone<sup>42</sup>,  
 For ever brooding o'er thy lonely study,  
 Making thy best conceptions foul and muddy.  
 Alas ! thy book displays no lucid " order,"  
 But senseless ravings that on frenzy border :  
 The Sybil's fury rushes on thy mind<sup>43</sup> !  
 At times, while to their cost thy readers find

The boasted product of thy sage delusion,  
Like molten images—wind and confusion.

And couldst thou then expect by means like these,  
The wreath of immortality to seize ?  
Couldst thou suppose that thy bewildering page  
Would charm and influence a future age ?  
Or didst thou dream that late posterity  
Would take their creed and sentiments from thee <sup>44</sup> ?  
Where are the “ numbers vast ” that were to raise  
The shouts of censure, or the strains of praise <sup>45</sup> ?  
No sign from heaven, no mighty change on earth,  
Announced thy book, or followed from its birth !  
Instead of being hailed a second Luther <sup>46</sup>,  
The mighty champion of oppressed Truth, or  
Assigned a place with Newton, Locke, or Bacon ;  
Thou for a sucking Antichrist wert taken !  
Nor hast thou been, with all thy boasting, able  
To save thy infant, frail, aspiring Babel :  
But it is fit that he who sows the wind,  
As his sole harvest should the whirlwind find.

Of pride and rashness see the bitter fruit !  
One point indeed is proved beyond dispute ;  
One truth, at least, our “ credence ” may receive,  
Foreknowledge was not *thy* prerogative !  
Polemic warfare else thou hadst not waged,  
Nor in the cause of error been engaged ;  
Unscathed, uninjured, thou hadst passed along,  
Nor seen thy name thus gibbeted in song.  
Well, learn at least a lesson from the past,  
If but a grain of common sense thou hast.  
At Wisdom’s fountain thou mayst freely drink ;  
But burn at once thy pen, and spill thy ink ;—  
A fit libation to the Shades of Night,  
The patrons that impelled thee first to write.  
But if an author thou art doomed to be,  
Lend me thy ears ;—this council is for thee.  
Let not thy tablets pure again be soiled  
With rank, luxuriant metaphors run wild :  
Thy freakish fancy’s wantonness restrain,  
And hold thy Pegasus with tighter rein :  
That Pegasus which is, without dispute,  
A somewhat headstrong and eccentric brute <sup>47</sup>.  
Seek not to take the unwary in those “ snares  
Of argument ” which Heresy prepares ;  
Lay not thy “ trap ” again to catch applause ;  
Nor bait with sophistry its gaping “ jaws ” <sup>48</sup>.

Distrust thyself;—let Scripture be thy guide,  
 And modesty in all thy thoughts preside :  
 Ask of thy sires, and those who went before,  
 The mighty and the gifted minds of yore :  
 Think not that all mankind were in the dark,  
 Until thou lightedst up thy feeble spark :  
 Presumption, rashness, affectation shun,  
 Nor hold thy taper up to light the sun.  
 Let this conviction on thy spirit dwell ;  
 God still remains THE GREAT UNSEARCHABLE !  
 Think not thy erring reason can supply  
 A line with which to sound Infinity <sup>49</sup> :  
 Let not thy ignorance expect to find  
 Itself the standard of the All-perfect Mind :  
 Nor e'er presume again to make THY NESCIENCE  
 An argument against THE ALMIGHTY'S PRESCIENCE <sup>50</sup>.



## ILLUSTRATIVE NOTES.

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<sup>1</sup> "We ought not to regard it as any degradation to the character of Omniscience to maintain that the Deity does not already know every thing which will hereafter be known."—*Inquiry into the Popular Notion*, &c. p. 118.

<sup>2</sup> "Only let these intelligible and self-evident principles, &c., and all ignorance and error will quickly vanish away."—*Letter to Dr. B.* p. 59.

<sup>3</sup> "The deep and dark entrenchments of religious mystery."—"The sacred, or rather suspicious, halo of mystery."—"The contemptible nostrum of religious mystery is beginning to be suspected, and the imposition and fraud will, ere long, be universally detected."—*Inquiry*, p. 73. *Letter*, p. 52, &c.

<sup>4</sup> "I must maintain the competency of the human mind, in every case, where it actually comprehends the meaning of any proposition, to decide and determine whether such proposition be true or false."—*Inquiry*, p. 34.

<sup>5</sup> "Regard with a distrustful shyness every interpretation of the Scriptures, that will not easily quadrate with the dictates of reason."—p. 46.

<sup>6</sup> "O implicit faith ! O pious credulity !" &c.—p. 127.

<sup>7</sup> "Revelation itself must of necessity owe *all its authority* to the convictions which it is adapted to produce on the human mind."—p. 33. "We can never be obliged to receive any proposition for truth, except on the ground of a rational conviction."—p. 36.

<sup>8</sup> "What may not any person bring himself to believe, while he will regard the *Christian faith* as demanding an *implicit credence* ! When a human being is under such a *prostration of intellect*, &c."—p. 56.

<sup>9</sup> "We neither can nor ought," says Socinus, "to be brought by the plain words of the *Holy Spirit himself* to admit anything which is contrary to *nature*."—See *Douglas on Errors*, p. 179.

<sup>10</sup> "In the year that king Uzziah died, I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. Above it stood the seraphim : each one had six wings ; *with twain he covered his face*, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly." &c.—*Isaiah*, vi. 1—3.

"The demons (*τὰ δαιμόνια*) also believe and tremble."—*James*, ii. 19.

<sup>11</sup> Of the person who yields implicit credence to the Christian faith, our author says, "He spreads the wings of his unfettered fancy infinitely beyond the limits of all possible existence, &c. He will always despise those *crawlers* upon earth that will thrust forward the proboscis of common sense, and put forth the feelers of rational investigation."—*Inquiry*, p. 56.

<sup>12</sup> "The knowledge of the Deity . . . must be capable of perpetual accession."—p. 82.

<sup>13</sup> "The opinion that the ancient prophets do actually represent the events which they predict, as being certain in their issue, without involv-



ing a necessary and infallible causation, is nothing less than a gross and palpable contradiction."—p. 45.

<sup>14</sup> "The answer which was returned to David's inquiry (1 Samuel xxiii. 11), like many other predictions contained in the Scriptures, must be regarded as *the opinion or judgment of God upon the case*, and not as a piece of information, &c. The opinion or judgment of an infinite mind upon anything which in its own nature is a casualty, can never amount to an absolute certainty."—p. 140.

<sup>15</sup> "The success and triumph of the Gospel, and the end of the world, not the objects of a certain and eternal prescience."—*The Argument prefixed to ch. xvi.* p. 169.

<sup>16</sup> Our author charges the following as an absurdity on the advocates of Prescience :—"If the Prescience for which they contend *does* include the whole of the Divine conduct from everlasting to everlasting, then it must of necessity apply to all its parts, nor is it possible for any single act or volition to escape its unbounded cognizance; it must be as post-scient of the first, and as prescient of the last, as scient of any intermediate occurrence:" and "then *there is an end to eternity!*"—p. 70.

Of course, not willing to *put an end to eternity*, he must adopt that view, which in his opinion presents the only other alternative; namely, that the Divine knowledge does *not* extend to the whole of the Divine conduct, and that there are some things which have *escaped* its cognizance, and of which it is now *not* "postscent!"

<sup>17</sup> Our author says that the object of revelation is "not so much the communication of instruction as to enforce obedience to the authority of God."—p. 122. And yet he has thrice repeated the assertion, that "God has revealed the *whole of his purposes*, in relation to the objects of Scripture prediction; and the *whole amount of his knowledge*, in relation to the same things."—pp. 172, 183, 191. To what, then, would he reduce the knowledge of God, "the sum total" of which may be communicated, without "the communication of instruction!"

<sup>18</sup> Pope's Essay on Criticism, l. 640.

<sup>19</sup> "*Reader.*—Why, Sir, a friend of mine the other day, very humourously observed, that you should have taken a comfortable seat among Milton's speculating devils; who,

' Apart sat on a hill retired,  
In thoughts more elevate, and reason'd high  
Of Providence, foreknowledge, will, and fate,  
Fix'd fate, free-will, foreknowledge absolute,  
And found no end in wandering mazes lost.'"

"*Author.*—The reason why Milton's devils got set fast in their speculations was, they had adopted the poet's own theory, and were labouring to reconcile an absolute and eternal prescience with the freedom of moral actions. In such a case, if the whole Pandemonium, with Satan at their head, had entered into a discussion of that subject, it must have ended where it began."—*Prefatory Dialogue to Inquiry*, pp. ii, iii.

<sup>20</sup> "SCENE.—*The Hall of Arimanes, &c.*

\* \* \* \* \*

"*A Spirit.*

What is here?

A mortal!—Thou most rash and fatal wretch!

\* \* \* \* \*

"*A Spirit.*—He is convulsed.—This is to be a mortal,  
And seek the things beyond mortality.

"*Another Spirit.*—Had he been one of us, he would have made  
An awful Spirit."—*Manfred*, Act ii. sc. iv.

<sup>21</sup> The scripture doctrine of a rectoral prescience in the government of the world, and the popular notion of an unoriginated and eternal prescience, are like Bozer and Senah; on the one are encamped the uncir-



cumcised Philistines, and on the other, the army of the living God.”—*Inquiry*, p. 129.

<sup>22</sup> “*Reader*.—And do you mean to say that the advocates of the Christian doctrine of foreknowledge don’t heartily believe in the truth of that doctrine ?

“*Author*.—I can assure you, my good Sir, that you have exactly hit my meaning.”—*Preface*, p. x.

<sup>23</sup> “It is like a polar and perpetual winter, where there is neither vegetation or animal life. . . . Finally, the doctrine of eternal prescience is as barren of mental deduction, as of moral and religious inducement. It has no relation whatever to any art or science, or any branch of literature; it presents no field for the luxuriations of fancy, or the sportive sallies of wit and humour. Here are no profundities for the soundings of investigation, nor are there any data for the calculations of chance, or the arithmetical process of numbers. The subject does not contain a single atom of material for the employment of the synthetical or analytical powers of the human mind.”—pp. 94, 95.

<sup>24</sup> “The hypostasis of things is at present an impenetrable mystery to the human mind, and will remain such, in all probability, world without end.”—p. 32. So, then, Prescience is not the *only* subject that is involved in “the suspicious halo of mystery;” and our author is obliged to “shield *his* ignorance under the pretended *mystery* of the subject.”—p. 53.

<sup>25</sup> “The popular notion is one that would imply a *prescience* that equally applies to all *the past*, and the present, and the future, of an unoriginated and unlimited duration.”—p. 21. This is a *novel idea*, rather than “a popular notion;” and its originality, none, I presume, will dispute. In another place, our author, with equal felicity, describes “*Prescience*” as being “*POSTSCIENT*” and “*scient*,” as well as “*prescient* !” —p. 70.

<sup>26</sup> “*An eternal now* ? What is the meaning of *now*, or present time ? A mere chronological point, an indivisible quantity of duration. The term *now* cannot apply to any measurable quantity of duration, and much less to any immeasurable quantity of duration.”—p. 99. In this luminous passage, we are told that *now* is a quantity of duration; and secondly, that it is *neither* a *measurable*, nor an *immeasurable* quantity ! In the next paragraph but one, we are told that “space is measurable, and so is duration; that is to say, all finite quantities are measurable, both of the one and of the other.”—p. 100. Since then, according to our author, “the term *now* cannot apply to any *measurable* quantity of duration;” and “all *finite* quantities of duration *are measurable*,” the term *now* must apply to an *infinite* quantity of duration. *Quod NON erat demonstrandum*. A proposition just the reverse of that which was to have been proved.

<sup>27</sup> Extremes frequently meet. Our author conceived his theory to be the only antidote to Calvinistic predestination; and yet both systems are based on the same assumption; namely, that nothing can be foreseen that is not ordained. “*Decretum quidem horribile, fateor : inficiari tamen nemo poterit qui præciverit Deus quem exitum esset habiturus homo antequam ipsum conderet, et ideo præciverit quia decreto suo sic ordinat.*” —CALVIN, *Institutes*, lib. 3, c. 23, sec. 7. Thus our author says: “I can readily receive the doctrine of prescience as a consequence, because I can easily perceive that if God has formed certain determinations, and has secured the issue by an effectual causation, the issue must become thereby an object of a certain prescience.

“I can receive the doctrine of prescience, as being evidence *a posteriori*, because I can perceive that a *certain anticipation must be supported by an effectual causation.*”—*Inquiry*, p. 24.

<sup>28</sup> "These are the utmost limits of possibility, and beyond these limits it is not possible for any intellect to travel."—p. 79. And yet in another place we are told, that the believer in Prescience "spreads the wings of his unfettered fancy *infinitely beyond* the limits of all possible existence."—p. 56.

<sup>29</sup> "These obvious and numerous discrepancies, between abstract possibilities and actual existence, open the door for the admission of an innumerable swarm of contingencies of every species, which flit through every postern of the human intellect, buzz along all the avenues to the heart, crowd the great thoroughfare of human life, and darken the whole hemisphere of the moral world in their ceaseless and portentous flight."—p. 51.

<sup>30</sup> "No man can rationally believe that any issue which God himself has constituted *contingent in re*, can be certain to his own anticipations."—p. 47.

<sup>31</sup> "ABSTRACT POSSIBILITY must have definable bounds, and immutable limits"—p. 48. "It may be asked whether the limits of possibilities are not wider than those of actual existence, and whether the knowledge of God does not embrace the whole *empire* of possible existence? I answer, it is undoubtedly possible for many things to exist which are not at present in actual being; (astonishing discovery!) and that the future and actual existence of such things may be, *possibly*, the objects of anticipation to the Infinite Mind."—pp. 79, 80. (Important information!)

<sup>32</sup> "Contingencies are identified with all moral agency, whether created or uncreated, and every attempt to subject them to the rules of a rigid certainty, would be nothing better than an outrage on . . . liberty, and a libel on the government, &c. They *refuse to submit themselves to the authority* of a rule, or the process of measurement: they shrink from the touch and vanish from the sight; they are ever changing in their forms; they are ever flitting on the wing; they ride on the fiery pegasus of a lawless will; they are created by every excitement of our passions, and are flung in myriads from every scintillation of the human fancy."—p. 53. "See them stretch themselves out into all their immeasurable amplitude, and pursue their aerial way along an infinite continuity of beings; as wide as from the margin of absolute certainty and actual existence, quite to the verge of absolute impossibility; and commencing their flight with the duration of the Divine existence, and continuing their course *from everlasting to everlasting*!"—pp. 51, 52.

<sup>33</sup> There are, according to our author, several Possibilities, who, like the Popes and Anti-Popes of the Romish Church, during the Great Schism, contend with each other for dominion. There are negative Possibilities, and there are positive Possibilities; and these, like the sons of a Turkish Sultan, are "equally capable of being"—crowned or hanged. They carry on an internecine war among themselves; contending till Victory, declaring herself on one side or the other, "shall render *one* of these possibilities an everlasting reality, and annihilate *the other possibility* for ever and ever."—p. 52.

<sup>34</sup> "All abstract possibilities are hypothetically *eternal*."—p. 50.

<sup>35</sup> "For by the actual transpiration of the positive possibility, *the negation* thereof has been *actually annihilated*!"—p. 51.

<sup>36</sup> "In receiving the doctrine of an Infinite Prescience, I must believe that it is not possible for the knowledge of the Deity to receive any *accession* in quantity, world without end. I must believe that the actual knowledge of the Deity is not capable of being *enriched* by the addition of one single perception, either from his own future conduct or that of his creatures."—p. 23.

37 "*All knowledge in God must be a personal acquisition.*"—p. 32.

"The knowledge of the human heart by the Deity, like his knowledge of all other things, except the hypostasis of his own being, must be, of necessity, *a personal acquirement.*"—p. 82.

38 "The destruction of the temple involves the *revocation* of some of the most explicit promises and predictions of the Old Testament."—p. 163. To this I answer, the promises of continued prosperity, made to the Jews, were conditional; and the consequences which would result from disobedience to the Divine law, and rejection of the Gospel, were foretold in the most explicit manner; and these predictions are now in the course of fulfilment. Other predictions have reference to times and events yet future. "I say, then, hath God cast away his people? (*Μή γένοιτο*) By no means . . . God hath not cast away his people whom he foreknew." "For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, *lest ye should be wise in your own conceits*; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. *And so all Israel shall be saved.*"—Rom. xi. 1, 2. 25, 26.

39 "The repentance of Josiah became the means of *altering the determination which the Deity had previously formed.*"—p. 144. Mark, xiii. 20. "It appears also, from the words of our Lord, that a longer period for the continuance of this terrible visitation of Divine vengeance had been previously meditated, if not determined; and that *afterwards*, for the elect's sake, those days had been shortened."—p. 174.

40 "If the Deity could foresee with certainty the final issue of human life, and upon discovering that any creature, if created, would be certainly and eternally miserable, and yet he could find no inducement, either to *cast his nativity*, or interpose between him and a certain and inevitable destruction, what would we think," &c.—p. 71.

41 "Let us try the effect of this solid and irrefragable argument on the doctrine of eternal prescience, and we shall prostrate that *hideous monster* at a single blow."—p. 67. "But some few intrepid spirits have had the courage to turn upon the *fearful goblin* of eternal prescience; and he has already commenced his retreat."—p. 84.

42 "Never did *ghost or goblin damned* present half so hideous a spectre to the eye of superstitious credulity, as this horrible doctrine would do to the pious feelings of the religious world."—p. 92.

43 I shall here present my reader with Virgil's description of the Cumæan Sybil, newly translated:—

"*Huc ubi delatus Cumæam accesseris urbem, &c.*"

"Arrived at Cumæ, and the sacred shores  
Where, mid the woods, the lake Avernus roars,  
The raging prophetess you will behold;  
In her deep cave doth she the fates unfold:  
To leaves the virgin then commits each note  
And name; in order ranging what she wrote;  
And in her cave secluded, leaves them there.  
Unmoved they lie, but when a breath of air,  
From the revolving hinge and door ajar,  
Blows on the tender leaves they fly afar:  
Nor does she seek to gather or restore  
Those scattered lines, or join them as before;  
And they who came to ask advice, retreat  
Uncounselled thence, and hate the Sibyl's seat."

ÆNEID, lib. iii, l. 441-452.

"*At Phœbi nondum patiens immanis in antro, &c.*"

"But hear the prophetess within her cave,  
Of Phœbus yet impatient, madly rave;  
Fain would her heaving breast the mighty load  
Shake off; but so much more the incumbent god  
Fatigues her rabid mouth, her wild heart tames,  
And thus compelling, to his purpose frames."

Ibid. lib. vi. l. 77-80.



Abundance of passages might be quoted from the "Inquiry," to justify the allusion to "senseless ravings," "the Sybil's fury," and the sarcasm of the prophet, "Behold, they are all vanity; their works are nothing; their molten images are wind and confusion."—*Isaiah* xli. 29. For instance, we read of "the first and last act, and the first and last volition of the Deity."—p. 69. We are told that "the hideous chimera of prescience usurps the throne of the Almighty, and dashes his crown to the ground."—*Ibid.* The doctrine of prescience is at one time represented as implying *the absence of all moral freedom* in the Deity; and at another, as rendering him, in theory, "infinitely more *guilty* than fallen Adam, or apostate Satan!"—pp. 66, 71. Did the scattered leaves, or the frantic ravings of the Cumæan Sybil, ever exceed this in incoherence?

44 "I do hope to check the progress of that doctrine on the minds of *future generations*."—*Pref.* p. xi. "I have the most sanguine and immeasurable expectations," &c.—*Letter*, p. 67.

45 "Vulgar critics, in *vast numbers*, will probably raise the hue and cry after my performance; but," &c.—*Pref.* xv.

46 "How will you justify the conduct of *Luther*, Melancthon, or any of the Reformers, &c., if you condemn the part which *I* have acted," &c.—*Pref.* vii.

47 "They ride on the fiery Pegasus of a lawless will."—p. 53.

48 Of the doctrine of Prescience, the author of the "Inquiry" says, "It is a species of theological vermin, that has infested the sanctuary, &c., so that when any person has begun to rid the house of God of these nocturnal enemies, by entangling them in the *snares of his arguments*, or by committing them to the faithful *jaws* of a logical deduction, he has thereby excited the sympathies of the whole Christian world, and drawn down upon his luckless head," &c.—*Pref.* xi.

49 When it is said that a doctrine, plainly taught in the sacred Scriptures, is contrary to reason, it is to our preconceived opinions, rather than to reason, that an appeal is made; and it is well known that preconceived *opinions* are seldom of any value. That every truth must be agreeable to *reason*, in its highest and most extensive sense, is certain; but that it should be agreeable to the preconceived opinions of every shallow thinker, is not to be supposed. The truths of Revelation are God's statement of facts; and, since truth is discovered, not by conjecture, but by a patient induction of facts, and by legitimate reasonings grounded on them, it is evident that the pretended appeal from Scriptural authority to reason, is merely an appeal from evidence to ignorance, and from truth to prejudice and error.

50 THIS, after all, is the argument of the "Inquiry:" human ignorance against Divine knowledge. "Thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself."—*Ps.* l. 21. Although we may find it difficult to conceive how foreknowledge can be possessed and exercised, without destroying the liberty of human actions, and the free agency of mankind; yet since the sacred Scriptures afford satisfactory evidence of the truth of this doctrine, we may *rationaly* believe it; and all declamation against it, on the ground of its mysterious character, is merely an appeal from Infinite Wisdom to human Imbecility. It is an assumption that God can possess no perfection that we do not possess, or comprehend. The unhappy results of such a mode of procedure, experience has fully demonstrated; almost all theological errors having arisen, not from too great, but from too little deference being paid to the *authority of scripture*, and the *decisions of God's HOLY WORD*.

## NOTE ON THE VIGNETTE.

Our VIGNETTE is an *illustrative* one. A BIRD, it is true, may not be capable of throwing *much* light on an abstruse subject; yet it may occasionally hold up a lamp to Wisdom, or serve as a beacon to Philosophy. The Storm Petrel (*Thalassidroma Pelagica*), or "Mother Cary's Chicken," is an instance of that natural sagacity in anticipating the changes of the atmosphere, which certainly looks like *Prescience*, and has, not unfrequently, been mistaken for something more. These birds are in ill repute with sailors, who account them the harbingers of storms; and even accuse them of *causing* the foul weather which they prognosticate. The sea affords them both a home and a kitchen, their food being the grease which floats on its surface. When alarmed, the deprecating appeal which they offer, is as smooth and oily a rill as ever orator poured forth. To prevent this inopportune display, the usual mode of taking them is by (that antidote to eloquence) a noose drawn tightly round the neck. When dead, they are still of some use. Being nearly all fat and feathers, in some of the northern islands they are burned for fuel, in others they are converted into lamps or candles, by having a wick drawn through them, and set fire to; a use of which, however sagacious, they can hardly be supposed to have been *prescient*. It is this tiny Pharos of the Faroese, that figures in our vignette, which is a correct representation of the Storm Petrel, dead, prepared, and tipped with flame—a *wicked* bird, but a WINGED LIGHT.



## APPENDIX :

### *Containing a Demonstration of the Divine Prescience.*

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“ Equidem præscientiam solam nullam inferre necessitatem creaturis, libenter concessero, tametsi non omnes assentiantur : sunt enim qui ipsam quoque causam rerum esse volunt.”—CALVIN, *Instit.* lib. 3, cap. 23, § 6.

“ Deiscientiam æternam immutabilem et infinitam esse, seque extendere ad omnia tum necessaria tum contingentia, ad omnia quæ facit ipse vel mediate vel immediate, et quæ fieri ab aliis permittit, mihi est persuasissimum.”—ARMINIUS, *De Prædestinatione, &c. Opera*, p. 491.

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I.—The doctrine of Divine Prescience may be proved, 1st, from the Infinite and absolute perfection of the Divine Nature, which must include Omniscience. If the knowledge of God were finite, his wisdom also must be finite, and then his power must be finite too; unless we admit the absurd and incongruous idea of Infinite power associated with, and under the direction of, a merely finite wisdom. In short, to limit one attribute of the Deity, would be to limit *all*; it would be to make him a *finite being*, and thus conduct us to all the absurdities and horrors of *Atheism*; for a finite being is “No God.”

Some have strangely regarded Omniscience as the mere *power or capacity* to know all things. This mistake arises from not properly distinguishing between Omniscience and Omnipotence. The possession of Omnipotence does not require that the Almighty should do all that he *can do*. Power may exist where it is not exercised. Its exercise is a matter of choice to its possessor. But boundless knowledge is something more than the power to know. To make Omniscience consist in a *mere capacity*, is to make it synonymous with *actual and entire ignorance*. And if, as stated by the author of the “Inquiry,” &c., “*all knowledge in God must be a personal acquisition;*” (p. 32.) then must the Divine Being have been *originally ignorant* of all things! A supposition not to be admitted by any reasonable mind. The inference, therefore, is irresistible; Omniscience is *not* the mere power to know all things, but the *actual knowledge* of all things, independent of choice and acquirement.

The possession of Omniscience at any time by the Deity, must imply his eternal possession of that attribute. If the knowledge of God can admit of increase, it cannot be infinite now, nor can it ever reach infinity. He who is infinite in perfection possesses, and must always have possessed, a knowledge of all things, the knowledge of which does not involve a real contradiction.

The opponent of the doctrine of Prescience maintains that the possession of foreknowledge, even by an Infinite Being, *does* involve such a contradiction. We maintain that it does *not*. That the *manner* in which the Divine Being knows the future is mysterious, we readily admit; but if difficulty of conception in us amounted to contradiction in a doctrine, there would be an end to all knowledge and all truth. The difficulty in this case is not greater than that which attends the doctrines of the Divine Existence, Eternity, and Omnipresence, or the creation of the world out of nothing. We ourselves have the power of reviewing the past, and of anticipating the future. Our memory, I grant, is not so perfect a faculty as to preclude occasional forgetfulness; and our expectations

are liable to disappointment. Still our hopes and fears have relation to the future; and human sagacity may be so improved, as to anticipate events that are yet future, with a great degree of precision and accuracy. Superior beings may possess these, or similar faculties, in a still higher degree, and in a much greater state of perfection. And why may not the Infinite Being so far exceed his creatures in his knowledge both of the past and the future, as to be neither liable to forgetfulness in reference to the one, nor of disappointment in regard to the other?

Where, then, is the contradiction? It is not asserted that God sees things future to be present, or things contingent to be necessary. Omniscience, so far from implying this, implies the contrary. It is impossible that God should know a thing to be existing, before it does exist. He must know present things as present; past events, as past; and future events, as future. In this there is no contradiction. It is equally impossible that God should foresee things that are contingent, as *necessary* and *inevitable*. Such a supposition would involve the absurdity of ascribing *error* to Omniscience. But when we say, that the Divine Being knows every possible course that any creature *can* take, and that he foresees the course which, out of these, that creature *will take*—the use he will make of liberty—the choice which he will voluntarily and freely adopt; there is, in this case, no contradiction either expressed or implied. Unless it can be shewn that such foreknowledge must *alter the nature* of the actions foreseen, and *make* those events necessary, which would otherwise have been voluntary and contingent. It is obvious, however, that *knowledge alone*, whether before or after, can have no influence in altering the character of the event to which it relates. This is admitted even by the author of the "Inquiry," who says, "It is also agreed, that the knowledge of an event, cannot possibly possess any influence whatever, in giving either existence or character to the event which it perceives."—p. 38. The foreknowledge, therefore of future and voluntary actions, involves no contradiction, and must be implied in that omniscience which belongs to God.

Those who oppose the doctrine of Divine Prescience, usually confound *certainty with necessity*; but these are perfectly distinct. Certainty is the opposite of doubt; necessity is the antithesis of contingency. Certainty, or doubt, is in the mind; necessity, or contingency, in the action or event contemplated. I may be certain of an event, although the agent, or agents, concerned in bringing it about are perfectly free. It is true that the certain knowledge of future events is, generally speaking, not the prerogative of man, though even *his* anticipations may have degrees of probability more or less *approaching to certainty*. The case, however, is different when we speak of the knowledge or anticipations of an Infinite and Omniscient Being. The certainty of the Divine foreknowledge neither necessitates the action foreseen, nor implies its necessity; but arises from the necessary perfection of the Divine nature, which is incapable of ignorance, error, or mistake. If, therefore, the existence of a free agent is "abstractedly possible," the possession of foreknowledge by the Deity does not neutralize that possibility: and if there are "moral agents" in the universe, that foreknowledge does not render them a whit the less free.

II.—The doctrine of Divine Prescience is proved by the express testimony of Holy Writ.

The cxxxix Psalm treats of the Omniscience and Omnipresence of Jehovah. One expression is, "Thou understandest my thought afar off," or "from afar."—v. 2. The original word, מרחוק, signifies "distant" in any sense, and *sometimes* refers to distance of place; as in 2 Samuel, xv, 17. But it can hardly be so intended here; for God "is *not* far

from every one of us;" a truth which in this Psalm is emphatically inculcated. The original word refers also to distance of time, whether past or future. "Hast thou not heard *long ago*, how I have done it," &c.—2 Kings, xix, 25. "Thou hast spoken of thy servant's house for a *great while to come*."—2 Sam. vii, 19. It is probably in this sense that the word is used here; and hence the old English translation of the Psalms, in the Book of Common Prayer, has—"Thou understandest my thoughts *long before*." The subject, indeed, is confessedly incomprehensible. "Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it."—v. 6. "And in thy book all my members were written—*when as yet there was none of them*."—v. 16.

In the Book of Proverbs, Wisdom says, "The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his ways, before his works of old. I was set up from *everlasting*, from the beginning, or ever the earth was, &c. While as yet he had not made the earth. . . . Then was I with him. . . . Rejoicing in the *habitable parts of the earth*, and my delights were *with the sons of men*."—viii. 22—31.

In Isaiah, the possession of foreknowledge is spoken of as one of those attributes, the display of which, in the fulfilment of prophecy, distinguishes the true God from idols and false gods. As the author of the "Inquiry" has preferred quoting it in the translation of Bishop Louth, I shall do the same.

"Draw near, produce your cause, saith Jehovah:  
Produce these your mighty powers, saith the King of Jacob.  
Let them approach, and tell us *the things that shall happen*:  
The things that *shall first happen*, what they are, let them tell us;  
And we will consider them; and we shall *know the event*.  
Or declare to us *things to come hereafter*:  
Tell us the things that *will come to pass in later times*;  
Then shall we know that ye are Gods.  
Yea, do good or do evil;  
Then shall we be struck at once with admiration and terror.  
But, behold, ye are less than nothing;  
And your operation is less than nought:  
Abhorred be the man that chooseth you!  
"I have raised up one from the north, and he shall come;  
From the rising of the sun he shall invoke my name:  
And he shall trample on princes, like the mortar;  
Even as the potter treadeth down the clay.  
"Who hath declared this from the beginning, that we should know it?  
And beforehand, that we might say, The prediction is true.  
There was not one that foretold it; not one that declared it;  
There was not one that heard your words:  
I first to Sion [give the word] Behold they are here;  
And to Jerusalem I give the messenger of glad tidings.  
But I looked and there was no man;  
Among the idols, and there was no one that gave warning,  
And I inquired of them, and [there was no one] that could return an answer.  
Behold, they are all of them vanity; their works are nought:  
Mere wind and emptiness are their molten images."—xli. 21-29.  
"I am JEHOVAH, that is my name;  
And my glory will I not give to another;  
Nor my praise to the graven images.  
*The former predictions, lo! they are come to pass*;  
*And new events I now declare*:  
*Before they spring forth, I make them known unto you.*" xlii. 8, 9.  
"Let all the nations be gathered together,  
And let the peoples be collected.  
Who among them will declare this;  
And will tell us what first shall come to pass?  
Let them produce their witnesses, that they may be justified;  
Or let them hear in their turn, and say, This is true." xliii. 9, 10.

In the above passages, *foreknowledge* is made the *proof of Divinity*, and is *claimed* by the Almighty, as his prerogative; and the idols of the heathen are shewn to be false and fictitious, from their *not* possessing it.



That foreknowledge is often associated with agency, and that predictions are *sometimes* the result of the Divine purpose, is admitted; but this is not invariably the case. God foretells what *will happen*, and what *will spring forth*, as well as what he has purposed to do. And since even the Divine purposes are brought about by the instrumentality of free agents and their actions, the foresight of contingencies must be implied, even in those predictions which are founded on the Divine purpose. The heathen oracles were incapable of predicting future events with clearness and certainty, not only because they were "destitute of an agency that was competent to the government of the world," but *also* because they were destitute of that *knowledge of the future*, which is included in Omniscience, and is the sole prerogative of the Supreme and Eternal God. The heathen oracles, from the deep and gloomy recesses of some grove or cavern\*, uttered responses that were only remarkable for their ambiguity; not so the Inspirer of the prophets:

"I have not spoken in *secret*, in a *dark place of the earth*;

I have not said to the seed of Jacob, seek ye me in vain:

I am Jehovah, who speak truth; who give *direct answers*;" (xlv, 19.)

Not a mere "opinion or judgment on the case." And, finally, the sin of the heathen oracles consisted in lying and imposture, and their predictions were all fictitious and pretended; while the predictions of the ancient prophets were real—the dictates of the Spirit of Truth.

"Assemble yourselves together, and come, &c.

Who hath made this known long before, hath declared it from the first?

Is it not I, Jehovah, than whom there is no other God?

A God that *uttereth truth*, and granteth salvation, there is none beside me."

*Ibid*, 20, 21.

"Jesus knew from the beginning who believed not, and who it was that *would betray him*."—John vi, 64. Παράδωσων, rendered by our translators "should betray," is the future participle, implying not obligation, but the simple futurity of the action.

"Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and *by wicked hands* have crucified and slain."—Acts, ii, 23. This passage implies the fixed purpose of God to effect the redemption of mankind, and the absence of all constraint or over-ruling influence on those who put Christ to death. It was their voluntary act, or it could not have been said that they did it with *wicked hands*. That God foreknew the event with absolute certainty, implies that he foreknew the means; for if the unbelief and cruelty of the Jews, though in themselves contingent, had not been the objects of a certain Prescience, the determinate counsel of Heaven might have failed of its effect.

"For of a truth, against thy holy child Jesus whom thou hast anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel, were gathered together, for to do what thy hand and counsel determined before to be done."—Acts, iv, 27, 28. The redemption of the world, by the sufferings and death of Christ, is the event intended, and the sins of Herod, &c., the means by which it would be accomplished: and yet that these were not the result of appointment or necessity, the opponents of Prescience will admit. The purpose of Heaven might have been accomplished by other means; but God, who foresaw their wickedness, permitted it to proceed to the fulfilment of that result which his wisdom and goodness had contemplated. "Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee: the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain."—Ps. lxxvi, 10.

"Whom he did foreknow he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glo-

\* See note 45.

rified.”—Rom. viii, 29, 30. Predestination is here spoken of, not as the *ground* or *foundation* of foreknowledge, but as its *result*. Those whom God foreknew as the believing and obedient followers of Christ, he appointed to a glorious resurrection with him. By the opposers of Prescience, as well as by the advocates of unconditional election and reprobation, the steps which conduct to the final result, are partially *inverted*, and Prescience made the *consequence* of Predestination. This is not more warrantable than it would be to invert the other gradations of the series, and make justification the *consequence* of glorification, &c.

“God hath not cast away his people whom he foreknew.” Their repentance and return to God are necessary to their future restoration. But if their repentance and conversion were not the object of a certain prescience, their restoration at the latter day would not have been so definitely and positively foretold.—Rom. xi, 2, 25, 26.

“Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience, and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ.”—1 Peter i, 2. The election here mentioned, however understood, is the *result* of Prescience, not its *cause*.

“Foreknown indeed, (Προεγνωσμένου μὲν) before the foundation of the world, but manifested in these last times for you.”—1 Pet. i, 20. If the redemption of mankind by Christ was foreknown and appointed before the foundation of the world, the necessity for that redemption must have been foreseen; and this implies a foreknowledge of our first parents’ fall\*.

III.—But the grand evidence of the doctrine of foreknowledge is afforded by the predictions of the Bible, compared with their fulfilment.

Many of the events foretold, were the result of innumerable volitions of free agents. In some instances, no doubt, such events were the subjects of a Divine *determination*. Yet even these, unless brought about, as in the case of the deluge, by the immediate and irresistible power of God, to the exclusion of all human agency, must have been the result of actions and volitions which could not have been necessitated, and must have been foreseen. For if these volitions and actions of free agents had not been the objects of Divine foresight, the issue itself must have been uncertain and precarious. In short, there is no medium between these two alternatives; either God is the only agent in the universe, and the fulfilment of prophecy has been the result of his immediate and irresistible interposition; or the voluntary and unconstrained actions of moral agents have been the objects of the Divine foreknowledge.

A bare enumeration of the principal predictions of the Old and New Testament, is all that the limits of this essay will allow. Prophecies concerning Noah’s, Abraham’s, Ishmael’s, and Esau’s posterity; concerning the sojourn of the Israelites in Egypt, and the result of the mission of Moses to Pharaoh. Prophecies of Balaam; of Samuel concerning Saul; of Elisha concerning Hazael; of Isaiah concerning Sennacherib’s death, and concerning Cyrus; of Daniel concerning the great monarchies; and of the Old Testament generally, concerning the birth, actions, sufferings &c., of the Messiah; of Moses, Daniel, Hosea, and our Saviour, concerning the fate of the Jewish nation; and of St. Paul, and St. John, concerning the rise and character of the Anti-christian apostacy.

The matters treated of in these predictions are so various and so multiplied, they extend through so many ages, and affect so large a portion of

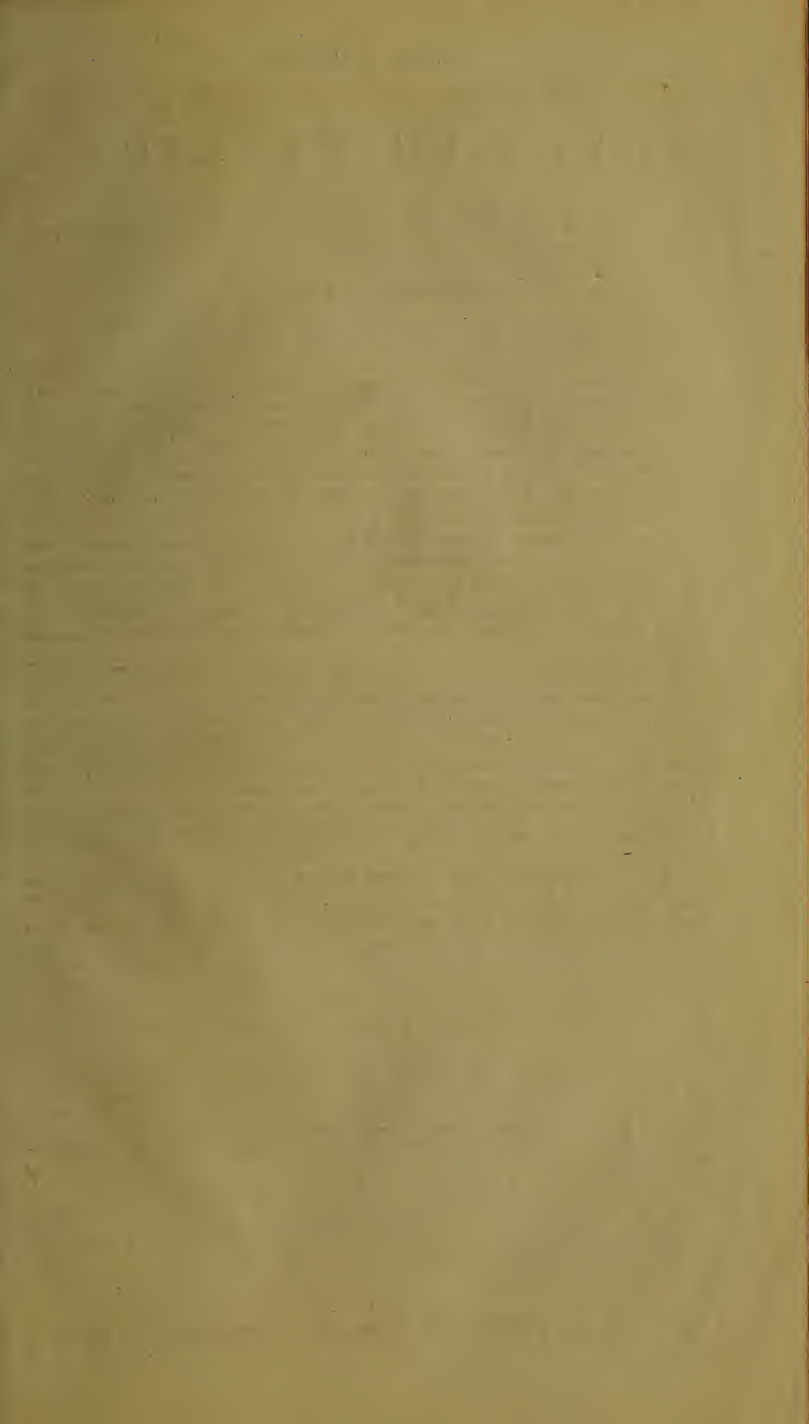
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\* The author of the “Inquiry” has no other method of evading the force of this argument, than by contending that “the word *before* does not in reality imply a priority of occurrence,” but “a subsequence of occurrence bordering on instantaneousness.” In short, that “before” means *after*! And this he considers “a perfect synchronism,” “an elegant hyperbole,” “a perfect harmony of truth and meaning!”—pp. 132, 133.



mankind, that they argue a complete foreknowledge of the future, in that God who inspired the prophets to utter and to write them. And the events foretold are so evidently connected with the voluntary agency, and especially the crimes and wickedness of mankind, that this foreknowledge *cannot* be resolved into the Divine appointment or purpose, without making God the author of sin, and reducing man to a mere automaton. That person must be blinded by error and prejudice, who can read these predictions, and deny to the Author of them the power which they so remarkably display, of darting his glance through every future age; of knowing the things that shall come to pass, before they happen; of declaring the end from the beginning; and of calling the things that are not, as though they were.

IV.—In conclusion, I have no objection to try the doctrine of Divine Prescience, and that of its opponents, by a comparison of their utility. Although a doctrine is not to be rejected as untrue, because its *use* is not immediate and apparent; yet I have no doubt that every true doctrine, and especially every doctrine of Holy Writ, will be found to *have* its use. That doctrine, however, must be not merely useless, but positively and highly injurious, which goes to expunge in theory an attribute of the Deity; which so boldly arraigns the Divine conduct—which makes the success and ultimate spread of the gospel doubtful, and the end of the world, and the day of judgment, a matter hitherto undecided in the mind of God himself; which invalidates the two grand external evidences of Divine Revelation, miracles, and prophecy; and betrays its advocates into so many blunders and absurdities. The doctrine of Divine Prescience, on the contrary, has a direct tendency to strengthen our faith in that Providence which governs the universe, and our confidence in that Being in whose hands are the issues of life and death. The displays of Prescience contained in Holy Writ, not only afford one of the strongest proofs of its Divine original, but they have supplied the people of God, from age to age, with a never-failing subject of adoring wonder and amazement; leading even the inspired apostle to exclaim, with devout humility, (Rom. xi, 33—36,) “O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? Or who hath been his counsellor? Or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things; to whom be glory for ever. Amen.”



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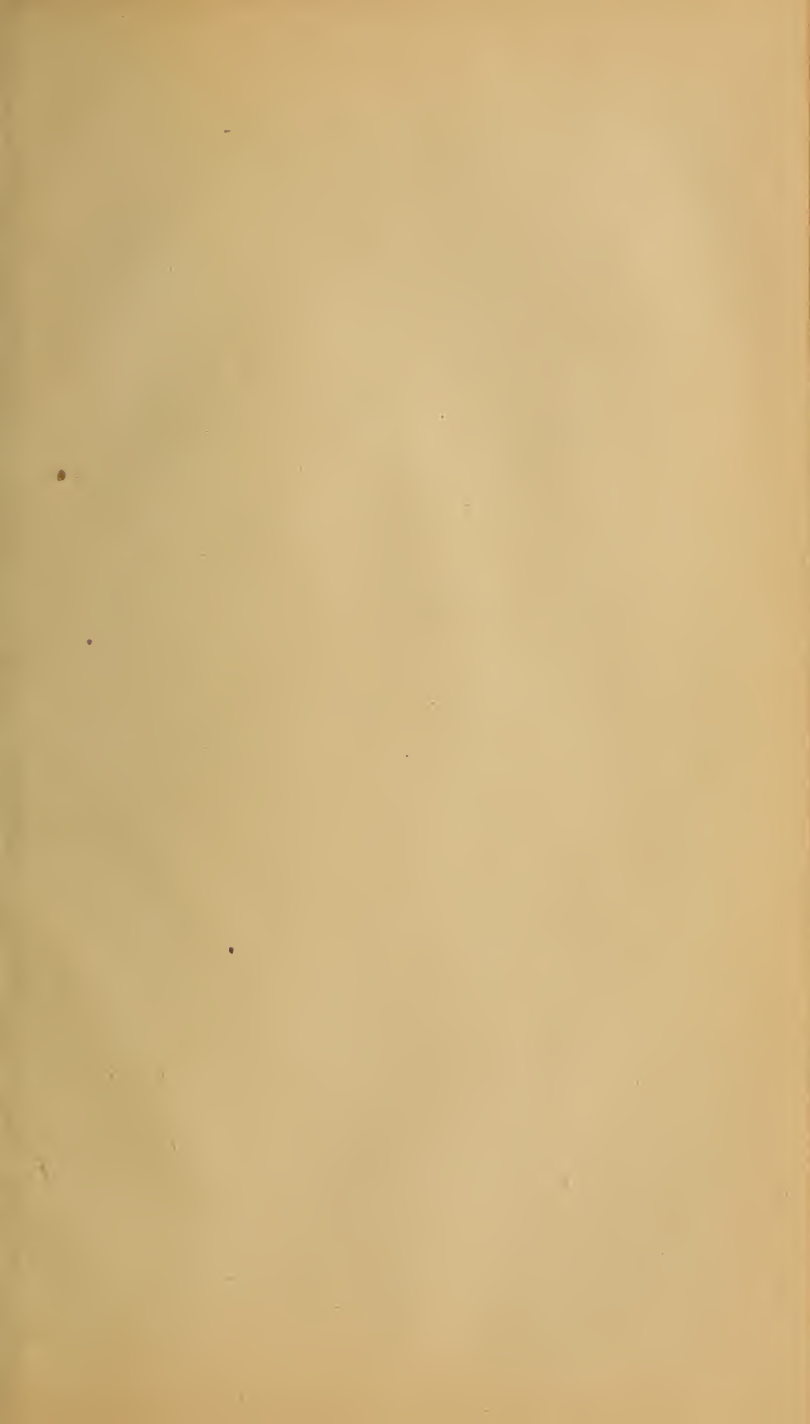
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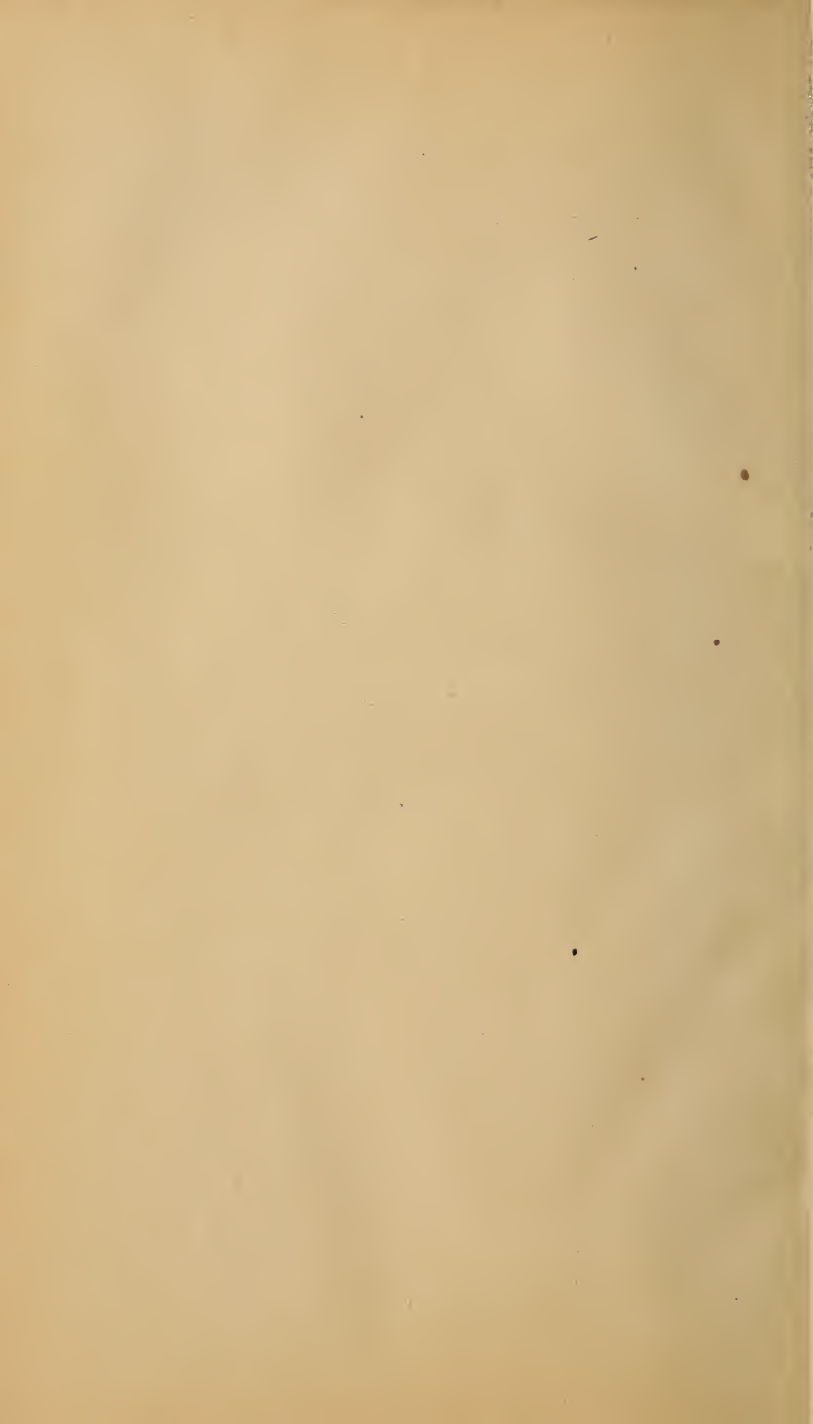
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